The Retrograde

Monday, April 13, 2026

UTD's official, independently-run student newspaper.

retrogradenews.com | SPECIAL ISSUE | @retrograde_news

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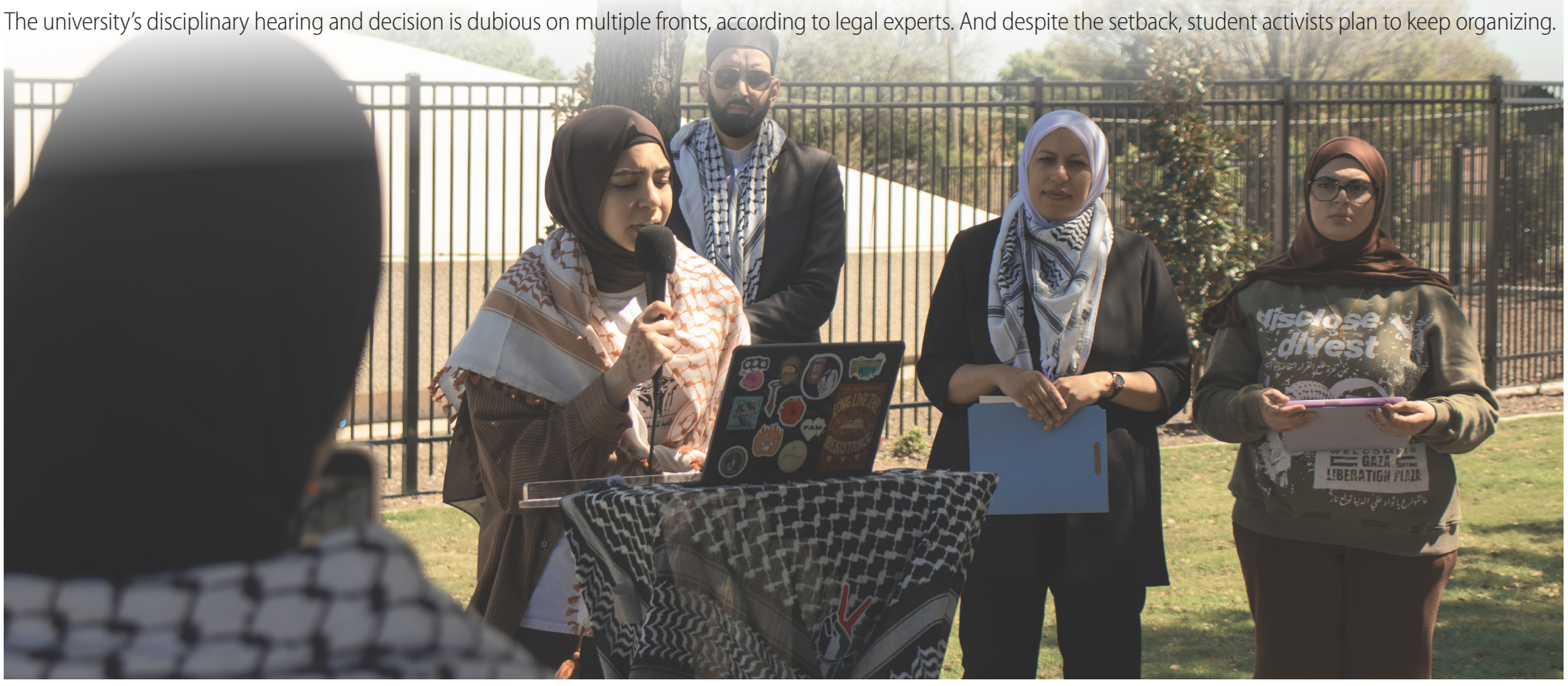
UTD SUSPENDS STUDENTS FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE

The university's disciplinary hearing and decision is dubious on multiple fronts, according to legal experts. And despite the setback, student activists plan to keep organizing.

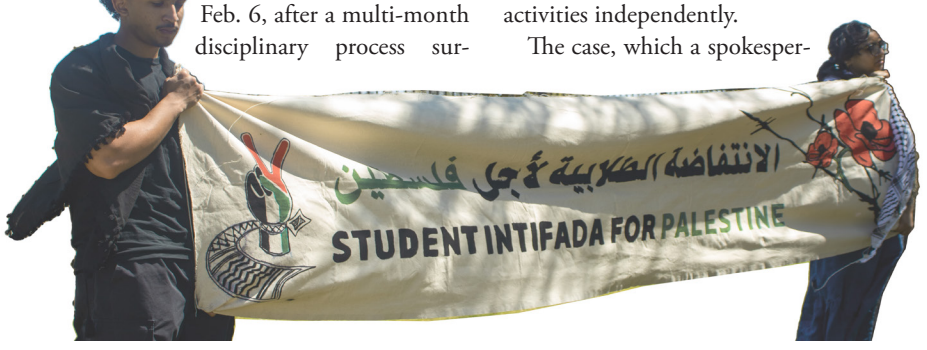


Newly rebranded SJP Dallas speaker addresses March 30, 2026, press conference crowd. FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | RETROGRADE STAFF

GREGORIO OLIVARES GUTIERREZ
Editor-in-Chief

Editor's note: In accordance with the media alert recommendation published by the Student Press Law Center, The Retrograde has granted multiple students and faculty full or partial anonymity in this piece due to legitimate fears of targeting or reprisal.

UTD has suspended its chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine for a year, effective Feb. 6, after a multi-month disciplinary process surrounding a brief disruption to former president Richard Benson's graduation speech.



The suspension, which is in effect until Feb. 6, 2027, bars SJP from operating as a registered student organization, officially hosting on-campus events or reserving rooms on campus during the suspension period. The institutional support once offered to SJP, like any other student organization, is gone, but individual students are still free to conduct activities independently.

The case, which a spokesperson from SJP described as "years of targeting and repression" culminating in a final blow, raises fundamental questions about what kinds of student speech and actions are safe on campus, and just how much UTD will use its authority to restrict what it disagrees with.

Marwa Elbially, an immigration and civil rights attorney representing SJP, said the disruption to the commencement ceremony — caused by students walking out during Benson's speech — did not constitute a substantial or material harm under federal or state law.

"The laws governing disruptive activities expressly state that any enforcement actions must be interpreted to avoid infringement upon the rights of free speech," Elbially said. "Prosecuting this 28-second disruption like this is characteristic of an authoritarian system where interruptions during official addresses are not permitted."

The disruption and the hearing

The case traces back to May 16 last year, when dozens of students walked out of UTD's spring commencement ceremony as Benson began his speech. Students chanted slogans including "From Columbia to UTD, we are all SJP" and displayed Palestinian flags. Two student organizers were later arrested and banned from campus. In the following months, UTD opened a disciplinary investigation into SJP as an organization.

According to disciplinary documents obtained by The Retrograde, the university charged the organization with two violations of the Student Code of Conduct: "inciting activities to disrupt" scheduled university events and "violation of general rules and regulations."

The case started with Student Affairs administrators bringing forward a complaint against SJP and serving as witnesses during the disciplinary hearing. The hearing decision was decided on by a third party, not a member of UTD as is typical in university discipline cases. Leila Henderson-Gary, an attorney at Thompson and Horton, was the sole hearing officer deciding this case's outcome.

Thompson and Horton specializes in defending institutions of higher learning like UTD. According to documents obtained by The Retrograde, Henderson-Gary has previously served on hearing panels for UTD in which she has ruled in favor of the school.

Henderson-Gary's statement of findings, dated Feb. 6 this year, concluded SJP was responsible for the disruption based on three evidences: a chant during the walkout including the chant "From Columbia to UTD, we are all SJP"; social media posts from SJP's In-

SEE SJP, PAGE 3

"No Kings" rally returns to DFW, bigger than ever

Thousands swarmed the streets of Dallas in protest against the Trump administration, meeting a small counterprotest

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY
Staff Writer

SUKRITI SINHA
Staff Writer

On Saturday, March 28 around noon, roughly 2,000 protesters, organizers and journalists gathered outside Dallas City Hall and flooded surrounding streets. This is the third nationwide No Kings rally since the movement's genesis in June 2025, and the demonstration in Dallas drew an especially diverse crowd united in a sustained demand for social justice.

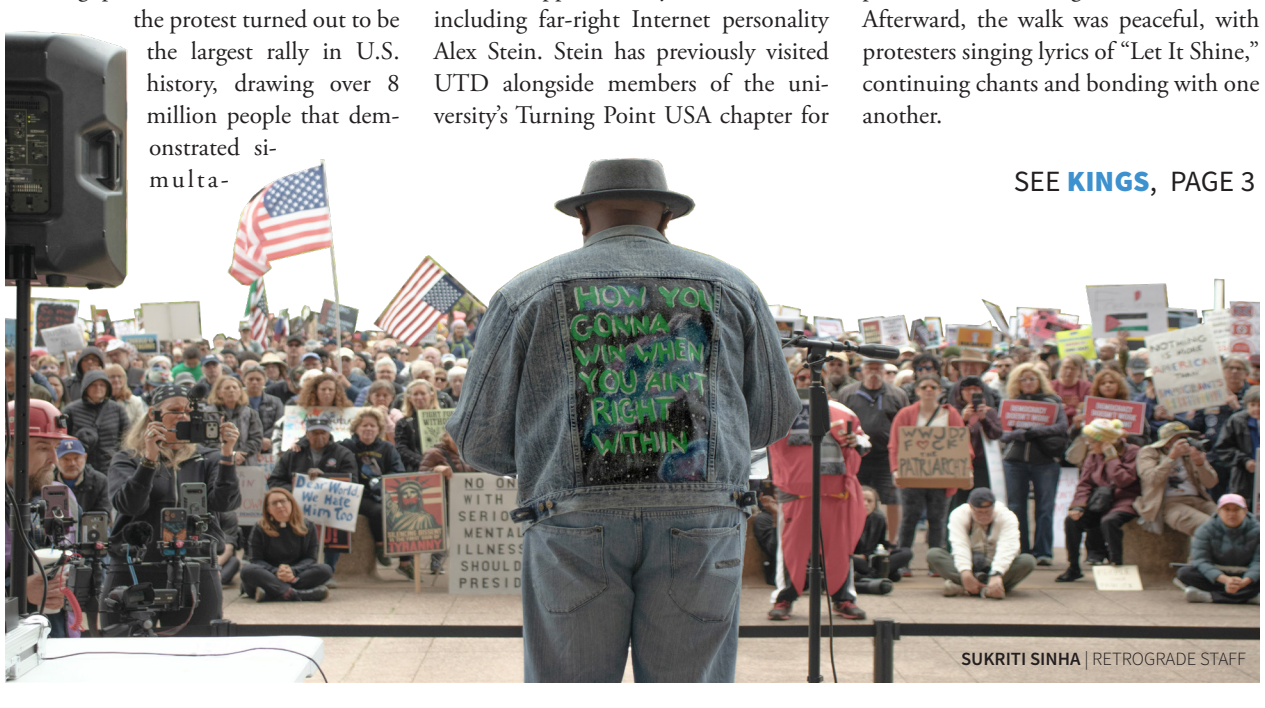
Led by the official No Kings organization, it was the most attended of the three No Kings protests in Dallas. Nationwide, the protest turned out to be the largest rally in U.S. history, drawing over 8 million people that demonstrated simultaneously across over 3,300 locations. The October 2025 No Kings protest drew crowds numbering 6 to 7 million across the country, making it the second most attended protest in U.S. history. Third place is held by the June 2025 No Kings protest.

As the walk commenced on Marilla Street, protesters held up signs or country flags and dressing up in expressive costumes. Signs included statements such as "This is how rights disappear" and "Immigrants deporting immigrants from stolen land."

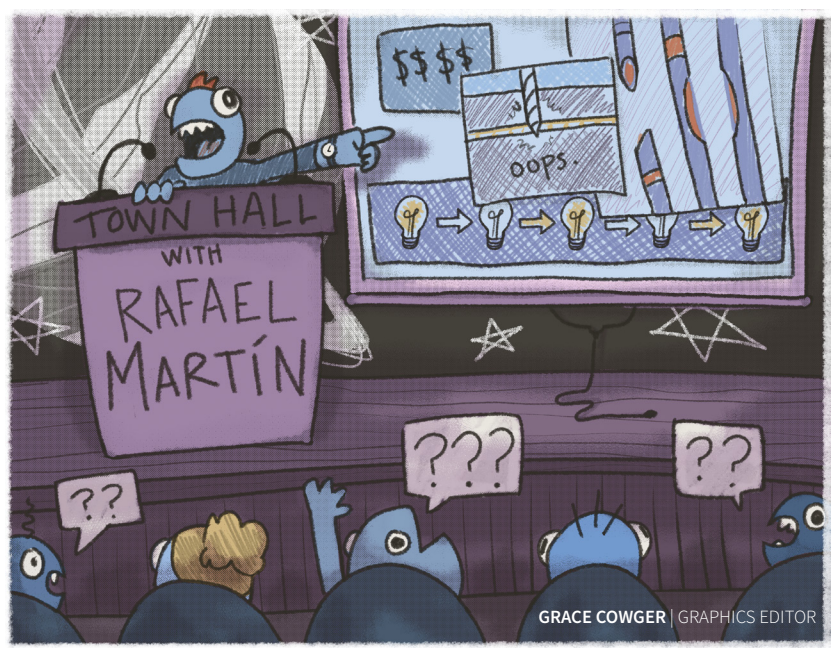
The Dallas protest was one of the approximately four locations in the U.S. that had a counterprotest, which consisted of approximately 10 individuals including far-right Internet personality Alex Stein. Stein has previously visited UTD alongside members of the university's Turning Point USA chapter for a counterprotest during Trans Day of Visibility. Another notable member of the counterprotest was Enrique Tarrio, a former member and leader of the Proud Boys and part of the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. He received a pardon from Trump last year. Dallas Police Department identified another counterprotester as Chad Rogers, who was arrested at the rally for throwing punches at a 71-year-old male protester.

The response from DPD was swift but messy, handling the situation by surrounding and isolating the counterprotesters from the scene. There were also a few reports of DPD acting hostile toward No Kings protesters in the process of containing the commotion. Afterward, the walk was peaceful, with protesters singing lyrics of "Let It Shine," continuing chants and bonding with one another.

SEE KINGS, PAGE 3



SUKRITI SINHA | RETROGRADE STAFF



GRACE COWGER | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Repair costs to fix outages slated at $2.5 million

Administrators explored UTD's plan to fix its strained and damaged power supply network during last week's town hall

GREGORIO OLIVARES GUTIERREZ
Editor-in-Chief

When the lights went out March 4, then again March 17 and for a third time March 25, students and faculty across UTD's academic core found themselves in a familiar position: staring at dark computer screens, locked out of labs and refreshing social media for answers.

In a virtual town hall held March 31 — the second such attempt at a town hall after the March 25 one was canceled because of the power outage — Rafael Martín, vice president and chief of operations, alongside other operations leadership offered the most detailed account yet of what went wrong and what it will take to make sure these outages don't happen again.

The short answer is that a contractor drilled a hole through the university's central underground cable network. A network that, after two decades in use, is already aging and needs urgent change.

The long answer involves millions of dollars, months of construction and a fundamental reevaluation of how UTD generates and distributes power to a campus that has outgrown its original infrastructure.

"We know that these types of disruptions have real costs to members of our community," Martín said. "We are very sorry for those losses."

These sorely needed and costly upgrades do not come as a surprise to the UTD community.

Last year, Michelle Rinehart, academic safety program manager with the Office of Institutional Risk and Safety, said during a presidential search town hall that UTD was behind on millions of dollars' worth of back maintenance.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

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Pricing Information: The first paper is free, the second costs $1.00.

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The Retrograde is published on Mondays, at monthly intervals during the long term of The University of Texas at Dallas except holidays and exam periods. Frequency is subject to change at the discretion of *The Retrograde's* management board.

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Since September 2024, *The Retrograde* has served as the official student newspaper of The University of Texas at Dallas per Student Government Resolution 2024-05 "In support of recognizing The Retrograde as the official campus newspaper."

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Police Blotter

March 2

1: An individual committed theft of property valued between $750 and $2,500 in Vega Hall.

March 6

2: An individual was found in possession of drug paraphernalia on Stewart Drive.

March 8

3: An individual committed assault (offensive contact) in Lot J.

March 9

4: An individual committed criminal trespass at the Callier Center.

March 10

5: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 in Capella Hall.

6: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 in Andromeda Hall.

March 11

7: An individual committed theft of property valued between $750 and $2,500 in Lot T.

8: An individual committed theft of a catalytic converter (replacement cost under $30K) in Lot D.

March 13

9: An individual committed theft of property valued between $750 and $2,500 in Lot M.

10: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 in Dining Hall West.

March 18

11: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 in Dining Hall West.

March 20

12: An individual was publicly intoxicated (alcohol) at the Plinth.

March 22

13: An individual committed sexual coercion in the Police Department.

March 23

14: An individual committed theft of property valued between $2,500 and $30,000 at the Sciences Building.

15: An individual committed theft of a catalytic converter (replacement cost under $30K) on Synergy Park Blvd/Floyd Rd.

16: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 in Recreation Center West.

17: An individual committed theft of a catalytic converter (replacement cost under $30K) on Synergy Park Blvd/Floyd Rd.

March 26

18: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 in University Village Building 36.

19: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 at a bicycle rack on the south side of the Founders Building.

20: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 at Engineering and Computer Science North.

March 28

21: An individual committed criminal mischief (tampering/inconvenience) at Parking Structure 4, fifth Floor.

22: An individual committed arson of a building (reckless cause damage) in Capella Hall, fourth floor.

23: An individual committed arson of a building (reckless cause damage) at Andromeda Hall, second floor.

March 30

24: An individual committed theft of a catalytic converter (replacement cost under $30K) in Lot U.

25: An individual committed theft of property valued between $100 and $750 at the Classroom Building.

26: An individual committed theft of a catalytic converter (replacement cost under $30K) in Lot B.

27: An individual committed theft of a catalytic converter (replacement cost under $30K) in Lot U.

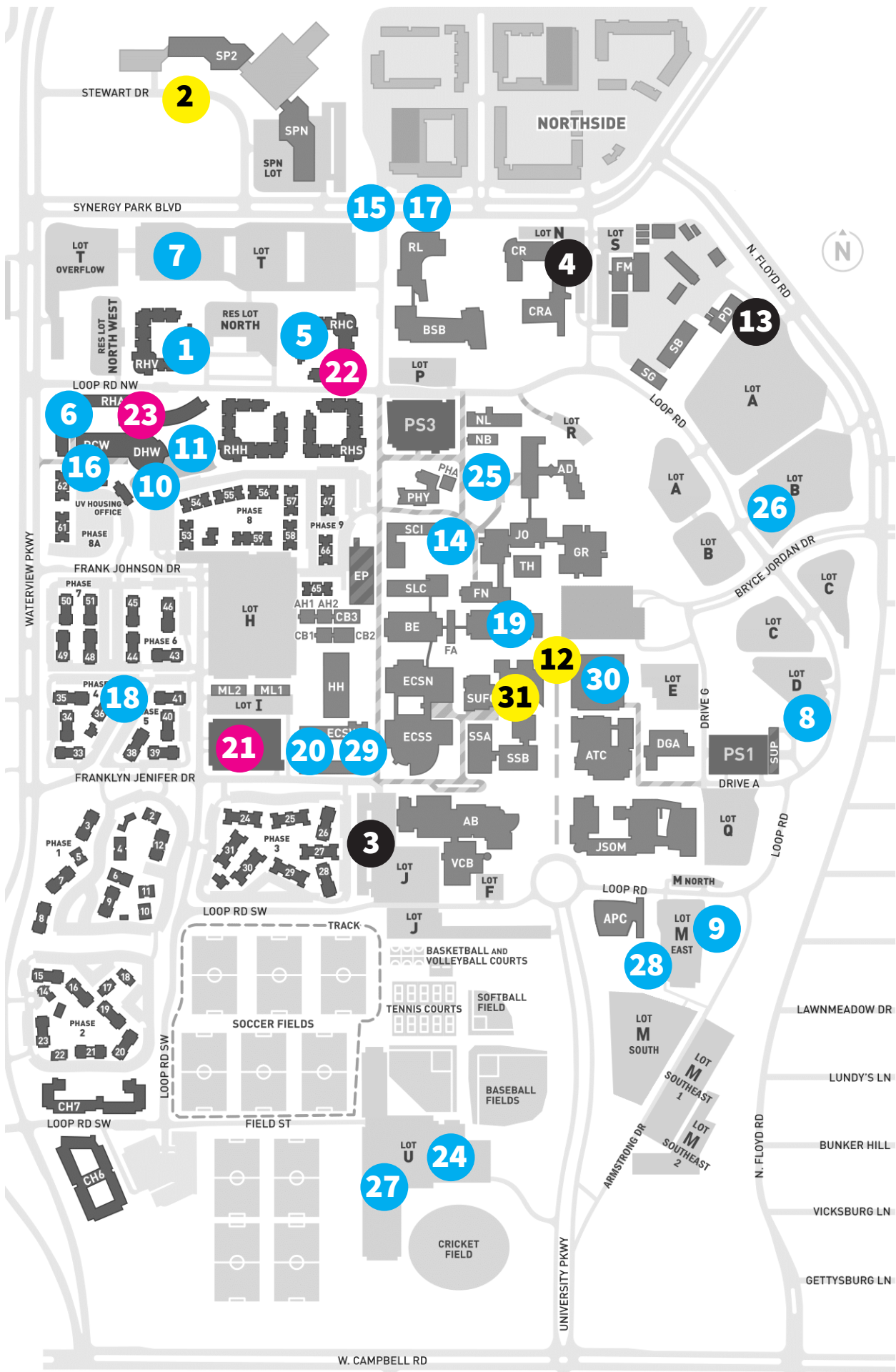
28: An individual burgled vehicles in Lot M.

March 31

29: An individual committed theft of property valued between $750 and $2,500 in Engineering and Computer Science West.

30: An individual committed theft of property valued between $750 and $2,500 in the McDermott Library.

31: An individual committed harassment in the Student Union.



MAP: UTD | COURTESY

LEGEND

- THEFT
- DRUGS & HARASSMENT
- ARSON & PROPERTY DAMAGE
- OTHER CRIMES

From The Retrograde Archives: July 7, 2017

Student Starts Online Petition for Temoc Statue

By: Emaan Bangash

This June, a student started an online petition to create a statue of Temoc on the roundabout at the campus main entrance. The petition has since amassed over 460 signatures.

Eric Aaberg, a business administration sophomore, said he first thought of having a Temoc statue after noticing the emptiness of the roundabout and proposed it to his friends. He received mixed responses at first, but ended up contacting Student Government President Ayoub Mohammed and was instructed to create a petition to generate more support.

"I truly think when people are entering UTD, they have that cool idea of the roundabout, however I think that the mascot would just add to the campus beautifying vision that higher ups have at UTD," Aaberg said. "And it establishes what our mascot is, and that way people could be like 'Oh my God, that's Temoc.'"

Aaberg said he envisions the statue to be about 10-20 feet tall, made of metal such as bronze and standing on a concrete platform. He added that the statue could be crossing its arms, holding a comet or catching a comet. Aaberg said he had other suggestions for things around the statues such as crosswalks so students could safely cross and take photos with the statue, having lights on the statue and flowers around the platform.

Aaberg said despite people not being sure about how they feel about Temoc or being scared of him, his love for Temoc made him pursue this project and improve school spirit overall.

"I love Temoc, and I think truly we need to embrace that school spirit and (have) a statue in a place where people could take photos and things like that and (have) an actual physical piece of Temoc rather than just the old costume in the Visitor's Center building for whenever he comes out," Aaberg said. "It's a sign that UTD's dedicating its spirit to our mascot."

Aaberg reached out to multiple campus departments including officials at the Alumni Center, who supported the idea. In addition, Aaberg is working towards sending emails to former alumni who were around when Temoc was first introduced and students as well.

"I feel like at UTD, we have a good sense of school spirit but it's kind of like you see either people with a lot of school spirit or not a lot, it's not a mix between," Aaberg said. "What I really want is to contribute to school spirit and I think having a statue and having other things too would definitely contribute."

He said he plans on having about 3000-4000 signatures total to get a large enough number to show students support the idea. The petition is currently circulating on social media.

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Biology junior Allyson Kizer signed the petition after speaking to Aaberg about the possibility of a Temoc statue and liking the idea.

"I feel like I have more school spirit than most people. I have a Temoc tattoo, so I feel like our school needs a lot of school spirit and having the terrifying Temoc at the Visitor's Center isn't really enough, you know?" Kizer said. "Most people only see that one, and they think our mascot's terrifying. So, I feel like if we had an updated statue, it might help with that."

Compared to other universities, she said, UTD could improve in its school spirit. Being on the dance team, Kizer said she notices students aren't as enthusiastic at school games as college students tend to be.

"I mean, just because we don't have a football team doesn't mean our other teams aren't really fantastic," Kizer said. "I don't think it would immediately make everyone want to support the team… but I think having a Temoc statue could eventually help."

Aaberg said he hopes to get as much support for the statue as possible to increase school spirit at UTD. He said possible future statues could be made in honor of the university's founders.

"I'm very excited to see where this goes because regardless, I truly think this is going to happen," Aaberg said. "We're going to be able to make a change at UTD and it's going to represent the students' voice as well as the SG's position and influence."

***Editor's Note**: As of April 12, 2026, UTD alumni have donated $6,231 to fund the creation of the Temoc statue, which is set to go up outside the new Student Union and Student Success Center.*

Moghe crowned sixth president

Moghe officially vested as UTD president eight months into term as some of Texas' biggest changemakers visit to pay homage

MARIA SHAIKH
Managing Ediotr

MUAAZ ABED
Staff Writer

Moghe, who has been serving as president of UTD since August, had his investiture ceremony April 2. The university ceremony, which officially confers the duties and responsibilities of an incoming president, dates back to the investment of the fourth president, David Daniel, in 2006.

Other events the university organized in honor of Moghe's inauguration include Student Affairs' Comet Party, a celebration with free food vendors and live music held March 31 in the Student Union Mall; the Bioengineering and Health Sciences Convergence Summit, a conference hosted by Moghe April 1 where researchers in health care and bioengineering discussed their findings; and the 6 for Success Comet Donation Drive, a charity event running from March 30 through April 12 where donations of six items to either Temoc's Closet or the Comet Cupboard are encouraged to commemorate the sixth UTD president. Additionally, decorative artwork depicting Moghe has appeared across campus buildings in the past few weeks.

The Comet Party

At 12:30 p.m. March 31, the Comet Party kicked off. Plinth visitors passed by an Indian chamber ensemble consisting of a sitarist, a tabla player and a violinist playing music that fused Indian and western instrumentation in honor of Moghe, who himself is a skilled sitar player. A nearby stall manned by Student Affairs and Student Involvement and Engagement personnel were giving out tins of commemorative M & M s — emblazoned with Moghe's face and name — and small packages of orange and green UTD-themed macarons. Opposite the M&M stall sat a tea station allowing students to brew a tea blend of their choice. According to a nearby sign, "Moghe appreciates a great cup of tea."

After a small announcement featuring Temoc, the festivities ramped up. A live DJ played jubilant tunes as the rest of the stalls and activities opened for students. A samosa station began handing out samosas, which, according to another sign, was in honor of Moghe's birthplace, Mumbai. In addition, several food trucks lined up on the Student Union Ramp to give out free food, offering a variety of snacks ranging from ice cream to lumpia to quesadillas. Two photo zones sporting signage celebrating Moghe's investiture were open to the public to take pictures in.

Arcade games such as Swish 4 Hoops, a one-on-one foot soccer game and an elaborate game that was a variation on rock-paper-scissors peppered the Plinth. Halfway through the event, the UTD Power Dancers and the UTD Cheerleaders performed a routine to commemorate Moghe's inauguration. Biology and neuroscience double major Rei Albertini found herself caught up in the celebrations.

"There was a lot of music, and Temoc was here and the cheerleaders were here, so that was fun," Albertini said. "It's really nice, I think it's nice to celebrate something like this."

The Plinth overflowed with students taking photos, playing games and having fun. But some Comets, such as electrical engineering junior Hemachander Rubeshkumar, were left wondering if the party took up resources that could have gone to the university's other priorities.

"I mean, the banner gives off some vibes, [the] music's nice [and] I'm not going to complain about free food, but this is a shit ton of money," Rubeshkumar said. "Can we pay our TAs please? I just feel like we have enough money to pay our people more and we're excessively spending on these parties."

As evening drew near and the Plinth began emptying, the three-piece fusion ensemble that kicked off the party performed once more.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

ALL PHOTOS ABOVE FOLD BY MUAAZ ABED | RETROGRADE STAFF
PHOTO BELOW BY FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | ASST. PHOTO EDITOR
GRAPHIC BELOW BY TYLER CRIVELLA | ASST. MANAGING EDITOR

New Wave UTD wins SG election

David Baker and Farhan Iqbal are set to begin their respective executive terms in office May 1 of this year

GREGORIO OLIVARES GUTIERREZ
Editor-in-Chief

After weeks of campaigning, student outreach campaigns, dozens of flashy posters and a heated executive debate, the spring 2026 Student Government elections ended April 8 with New Wave UTD winning the executive race.

Led by neuroscience junior David Baker and computer science senior Farhan Iqbal, New Wave UTD ran on a 22-point platform focused broadly on protecting student rights, improving student wellness, collaborating with student organizations and demanding accountability from university administrators. President-elect Baker and vice president-elect Iqbal will assume office May 1.

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | ASST. PHOTO EDITOR

In total, 755 students — equivalent to 2.5% of the student body — voted in the election. Baker received 65.4% of the vote in his race and Iqbal received 61.5% of the vote in his, respectively 1.6% and 1.5% of the overall student body. Iqbal and Baker both got over twice as many votes as the respective candidates from the opposing ticket, Ho/Pe.

In an interview with *The Retrograde* following the release of the results, Baker and Iqbal expressed excitement about their win and said they will focus on continuing existing SG initiatives and tackling ongoing campus controversies.

"I'm excited to start doing work," Iqbal said.

When discussing their immediate priorities after taking office, Baker said his team is looking at two key areas. Baker said he wants SG to create a student leader committee focused on collaborating with student athletes, Greek life and various community councils and organizations. The second item Baker wants to address immediately is the recent suspension of Students for Justice in Palestine at UTD, which as of March 31 operates as SJP Dallas.

"We are already investigating what happened to try to figure out the process and everything else that happened with the suspension," Baker said. "Our hope is to figure out and get a finalized idea of what specifically happened during that whole process and hopefully overturn whatever the system was that caused that in the first place."

Iqbal said he wants to focus on working with graduating senate leaders before their institutional knowledge leaves the university.

"My goal is to ensure all the knowledge [graduating students] have is retained by SG and all the leadership experience and project planning experience is able to be carried onward to future student leaders," Iqbal said.

Baker said that while students are the core of New Wave UTD's base, he also wants to work with faculty and staff to ensure events are as successful as possible and real change can happen on important issues. Baker said that while there was some confusion regarding faculty governance in the wake of the Academic Senate's removal — and then the removal of its replacement, the Interim Faculty Advisory Committee — SG would be ready to work with whatever faculty governance group came next. Baker said that SG also hoped to work with faculty in the university's chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

"Moving forward, I definitely think having a very strong connection with AAUP is how we reach a lot of the faculty, especially now that they don't have a governing body," Baker said.

Baker said SG will continue collaborating with university administration, but enforce firm boundaries on key issues affecting students.

"In some regards, we can be very unyielding when it comes to talking about expression or speech or other lines in the sand that the administration is trying to draw," Baker said. "There are many issues we just physically do not want to or can't compromise on. But if we want to make systemic change, we definitely need some level of buy-in from the administration."

Healthcare studies sophomore and Ho/Pe ticket presidential candidate Thaden Ho said that while they may not have won this election, they plan on continuing their advocacy for students.

"We'll be working behind the scenes for Artist Alley, free speech on campus and to hold this new administration accountable if, and when, they bend the knee to UTD's unfair rules," Ho said.

Baker said he wants to offer students, regardless of how or whether they voted, a message before his new term began.

"No matter how you voted or your opinions on campus, we want to hear your problems," Baker said. "We want to hear your issues. We really want to make large systemic changes on campus. If you have concerns or anything that you would want SG to look into or investigate, we strongly encourage you to reach out, because this is what SG is here for. We're here to help advocate. We're here to make change, and we want to make sure that every student feels represented and heard."

KINGS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The walk concluded back at Dallas City Hall around 3 p.m., with protesters either dispersing or visiting tables of the local grassroots organizations that had help set up the movement.

A significant portion of the protesting crowd was young, featuring students in particular. Assistant Professor Jonathan Pinckney has been researching and teaching about nonviolent protests and social movements at UTD for a few years now, and according to him, this is no surprise.

"Students are like the lifeblood of protest movements," he said. "Name any significant nonviolent movement from either the U.S. or around the world that achieved major policy changes, you will almost inevitably find students were either the leaders, or they were sort of a key constituency."

According to multiple protesters, one of the main motivations for people to show up for the rally was the heightened presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement around the country and its arrests of citizens without warrants. In the face of these arrests and a deepening anti-immigration atmosphere during Trump's second term, organizations like El Movimiento were assembled in DFW. Prior to the protest, El Movimiento and other political organizations' efforts to prepare, build morale and encourage high turnout have included political education events, training DFW residents to become legal observers of law enforcement's conduct and raising funds for families needing legal aid after ICE arrests.

"I know the fear that is happening when they go to their appointments or check-ins for the field office," Azael Alvarez, lead organizer of El Movimiento, said. "They're so scared right now, so we gotta advocate for [them]."

Environmental activism is another issue multiple protesters said they resonated with. In light of the increasing global environmental crisis, a national organization called the Sunrise Movement was assembled. Its DFW chapter has been gathering locals to plant trees, participate in town halls to advocate for sustainable initiatives and receive education on environmental problems. For a protest with as diverse an attendance as No Kings — drawing demonstrators across multiple races, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds and age groups — a coordinator for Sunrise named Gen said understanding how multiple political causes, like war and environmental rights, fit together is key.

"You can't be an environmentalist without being anti-war," Gen said. "There's so much environmental destruction … that goes on by bombing places and by supporting and creating genocides."

The first wave of No Kings marches stemmed from many Americans' opposition toward the military parade that occurred on President Donald Trump's birthday. Subsequently, the movement grew into one against Trump's actions and policies, especially regarding immigration, militarization and war. In the last year, the movement has increasingly collected the support and partnership of national organizations such as Indivisible and Amnesty International.

Members of political organizations gave speeches to the crowd during the Saturday rally, aiming to inspire and motivate protesters to keep protesting beyond just that day. Despite variety and distinctiveness in each group's advocacy efforts and speeches, all speakers reached a collective conclusion: that the U.S. has been turning into a monarchy under the Trump administration, but there is no space for kings in America.

This sentiment of showing up regularly, not just for one march, was echoed by attendees like local pastor, author and professor Michael Waters.

"We've got to continue to show up," Waters said. "Because that's the only way that we can bring about a change in our nation and really in our world."

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | RETROGRADE STAFF

SUKRITI SINHA | RETROGRADE STAFF

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | RETROGRADE STAFF

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | RETROGRADE STAFF

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | RETROGRADE STAFF

SJP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"From Columbia to UTD, we are all SJP"; social media posts from SJP's Instagram account that the university saw as encouragement of disruptive protest; and the fact that a student listed on SJP's member roster led some of the chanting during the walkout.

The same Student Affairs leadership team who served as the complainants and witnesses also denied SJP's appeal of the decision on March 11. Vice President of Student Affairs Gene Fitch wrote in the appeal rejection:

"The speech made during the disruption, SJP's social media posts calling for disruption of commencement ceremonies, and SJP's subsequent dissemination via social media of video recordings of these disruptive activities are sufficient to support the conclusion that SJP and/or its members led, incited and/or participated in this disruption of university activities."

Dominic Coletti, a student press program officer at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, said universities have full legal right to punish disruptions, and can have a small group of administrators overseeing the process because of the constraints imposed by university policy and limited resources. However, he said administrators still have to do their due diligence throughout the entire process, which he believed UTD lacked after he reviewed SJP's disciplinary documents. Coletti said UTD's approach in this case blurred the lines between legal and illegal action, which undermined not only this case but future disciplinary proceedings on campus.

"The university got exactly one thing right when it came to its First Amendment analysis, which is that disruption is not protected, and the university has a right to punish that." Coletti said. "But it's frustrating to see a university conflating actual disruption with speech it doesn't like, because that muddying of the line makes it harder to go after actual disruption when it does occur."

SJP's spokesperson, who requested anonymity because of ongoing legal and procedural concerns, told The Retrograde that throughout the entire process, their organization maintained the protest was autonomous and that SJP had not organized or endorsed it. The spokesperson said SJP did not hear a word about any issues with the graduation disruption until Sept. 2, nearly four months later, when it received a notice that it had violated community standards and would be placed in disciplinary proceedings. No public or archived posts are available that depict SJP calling for students to walk out of the commencement ceremony in spring 2025.

Do First Amendment protections apply?

Henderson-Gary's statement included a finding that has drawn scrutiny from First Amendment advocates. It reads, "The manner in which the commencement day protest activity occurred is not protected by the First Amendment."

Amanda Nordstrom, strategic campaigns counsel at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, said that the determination raises serious concerns. Political speech, she said, receives significant First Amendment protection, and universities can only punish students for expression that falls into narrow categories of unprotected speech such as true threats or incitement to imminent lawless action.

"This seems like wholly protected activity," Nordstrom said after reviewing the hearing documents. "The First Amendment does not grant an unbridled right to protest at any time or place. But a university has to prove that what students did met one of the exacting categories of unprotected expression."

After reviewing the complete set of disciplinary documents SJP provided to The Retrograde, Coletti said the university's argument is incoherent.

"The university established that a group had done something wrong, but it didn't really seem to have coalesced around a single unified theory of what that bad thing was," Coletti said. "At various points, the allegation is that the group incited the disruption. At other points, it was simply that the group had condoned the events. At other points, it seemed like the university wanted to argue that SJP had actually organized the event."

Nordstrom said the university's argument that SJP should be held responsible for individual members' actions because the organization's Instagram page highlighted the walkout after it happened is dubious. SJP, alongside the Palestinian Youth Movement Dallas and National SJP, posted a video May 16 depicting students walking out of the commencement ceremony. Two days later, SJP called on graduating students to wear keffiyehs and raise the Palestinian flag during their graduation to make Palestine unavoidable.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com

JSOM's Tradecraft cafe shutters from incoming Starbucks' noncompete

The new JSOM building, still under construction, will house campus' second Starbucks. Meanwhile, the wall enclosing Tradecraft's former spot is looking for a use case.

ALEX LAWLESS | RETROGRADE STAFF

The new wall in JSOM II which replaced Tradecraft Coffee and Tea Bar as JSOM prepares for the opening of JSOM III.

GREGORIO OLIVARES GUTIERREZ
Editor-in-Chief

For weeks now, JSOM students have walked past a newly-erected wall where Tradecraft Coffee + Tea Bar once stood. According to JSOM Dean Hasan Pirkul, the closure stems from the upcoming opening of JSOM III, the business school's third building, which is scheduled to open this summer around July. That building is currently scheduled to house UTD's second Starbucks, resulting in the Tradecraft café's retirement.

Pirkul said Tradecraft had been winding down its operations as of late, cutting back on hours and days open, so the closure isn't a big loss for JSOM. The small space that's been walled off is still accessible from elsewhere; Pirkul said it is appropriate for use as a storage room.

"One of the conditions [Starbucks] set out was that they didn't want to have another coffee place competing with them in the same complex, because these buildings are connected to each other," Pirkul said.

Pirkul said that discussions for what to do with Tradecraft had been ongoing. Using the café-style set up for a new reception or information desk had been the leading option, he said, until that was no longer possible with the new wall.

"One day I came and I saw that wall, just like you, as I was walking by," Pirkul said. "They thought that they cleared it with me. Technically, the space belongs to the auxiliary operations for the university, not to us."

> "Believe me, we cannot wait to occupy our new building."
>
> **— Hasan Pirkul**

Pirkul said that the wall's erection was a miscommunication and not a conflict.

"Frankly, we have been talking for a while, and I thought we did not decide to finalize," Pirkul said. "They apparently thought we did."

While a final decision has not been made about the new wall's use, the dean's personal preference for it would be an electronic screen.

According to the dean, JSOM III will feature an elevated courtyard with a small amphitheater, water fountains and benches for students to study and lounge. It will also serve as the new home for all of the school's undergraduate programs, including advisers, support staff, programs directors and undergraduate resources.

"I'm trying to position the school so that this new building will be the headquarters for undergrads," Pirkul said. "[JSOM I] will become the graduate student space. JSOM II will be the boundary — everybody can hang out there and fight for space. I'm just trying to give some separation between undergrads and grads and make people feel they have a home regardless of what program they are in."

The Retrograde reached out to UTD Dining and Auxiliary Services, who oversees campus restaurants, for comment and the exact timeline of Tradecraft's removal. As of publication, they did not respond for comment.

JSOM III has been under construction since Oct. 8, 2024, and Pirkul said he is happy to see construction finally come to a close.

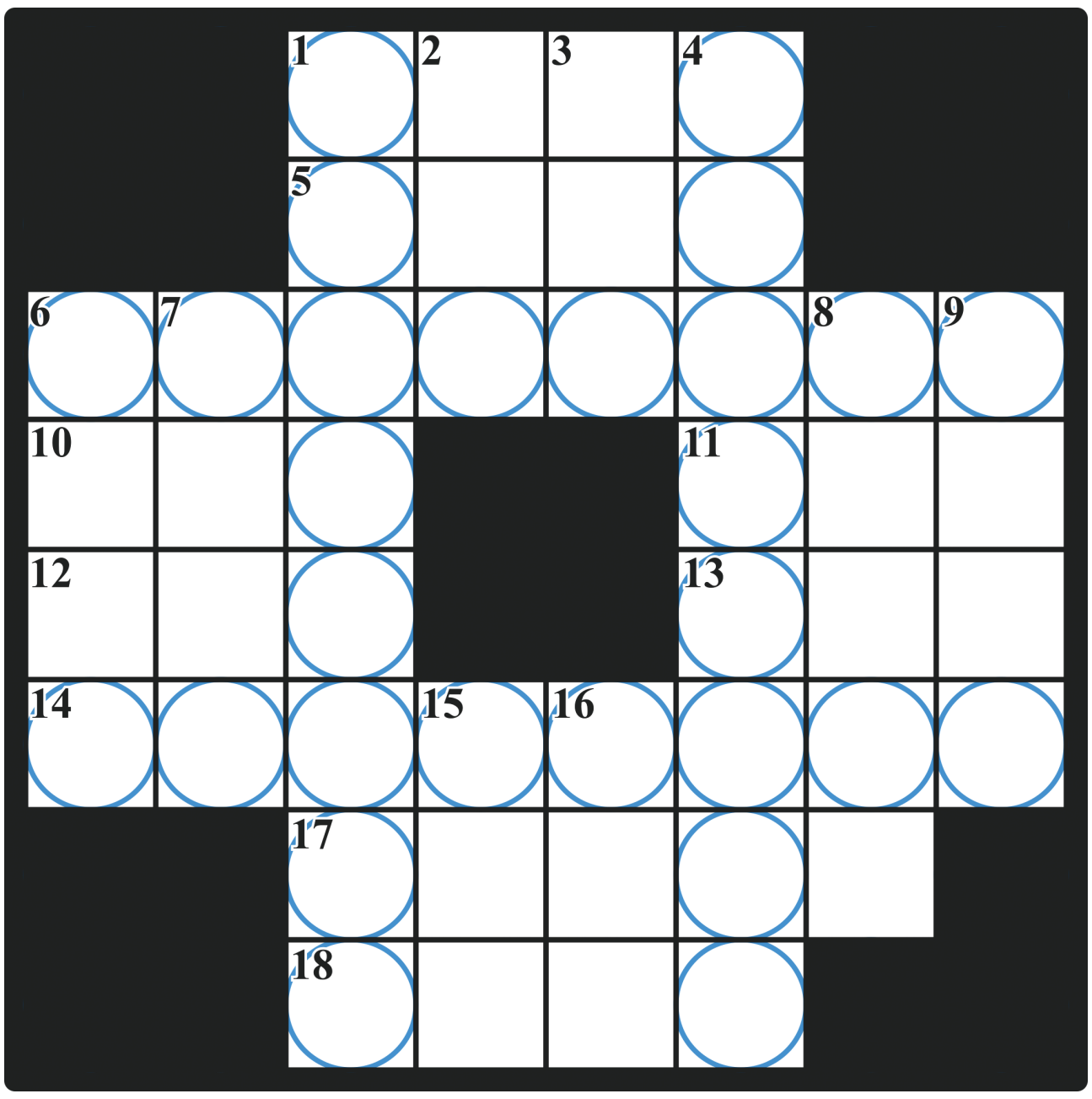
"Believe me, we cannot wait to occupy our new building," Pirkul said.

Vinyl Record (Taylor's Version)

TYLER CRIVELLA | RETROGRADE STAFF

DIFFICULTY ★★☆☆☆

Answers upside-down bottom of page



Across

1 Doing nothing
5 Close
6 Outlaw
10 Chess ranking: Abbr.
11 "Help!" at sea
12 Final month: Abbr.
13 Baby, or potato
14 At all additional times?
17 2025 Grammy winner "___ Like __"
18 Rip

Down

1 Not guilty
2 Audibly low grade, but still better than failing?
3 Video game delay
4 Highest grossing music trip of our epoch?
6 Advised within bare details?*
7 Map height: Abbr.
8 Entryways, with handles, usually
9 East, in Barcelona
15 Court winner over Wade
16 Mamdani's train system: Abbr.

Need a hint?

Clues that end with "?" contain some form of wordplay or riddle. Clues that end with "Abbr." are an abbreviation or acronym. Clues with "*" are cryptics (see below for more). Grid spaces with a circle are theme words that tie into the puzzle's title.!

*What's the Cryptic?

6Down is a special clue called a cryptic, where each word plays a role in the puzzle. In this clue, "advised" is the definition of the answer word; "within" is the indicator of what you need to do to solve the clue; "bare details" are the fodder that, using the indicator, reveals the answer. In this case, you can look "within" "**bare de**tails" to find the answer: rede, an archaic word for advice.

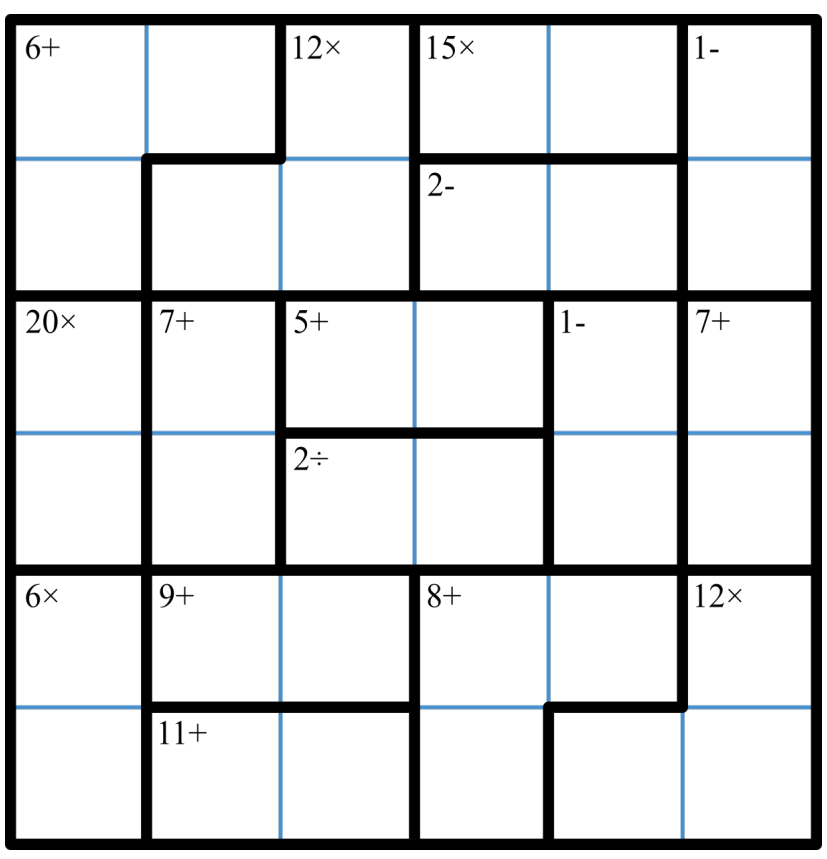
Across
1 Idle
5 Near
6 Renegade
10 ELO
11 SOS
12 Dec.
13 Tot
14 Evermore
17 Not Us
18 Tear

Down
1 Innocent
2 "Dee"
3 Lag
4 Eras Tour
6 Rede*
7 Elev.
8 Doors
9 Este
15 Roe
16 MTA

Puzzles

KenKen

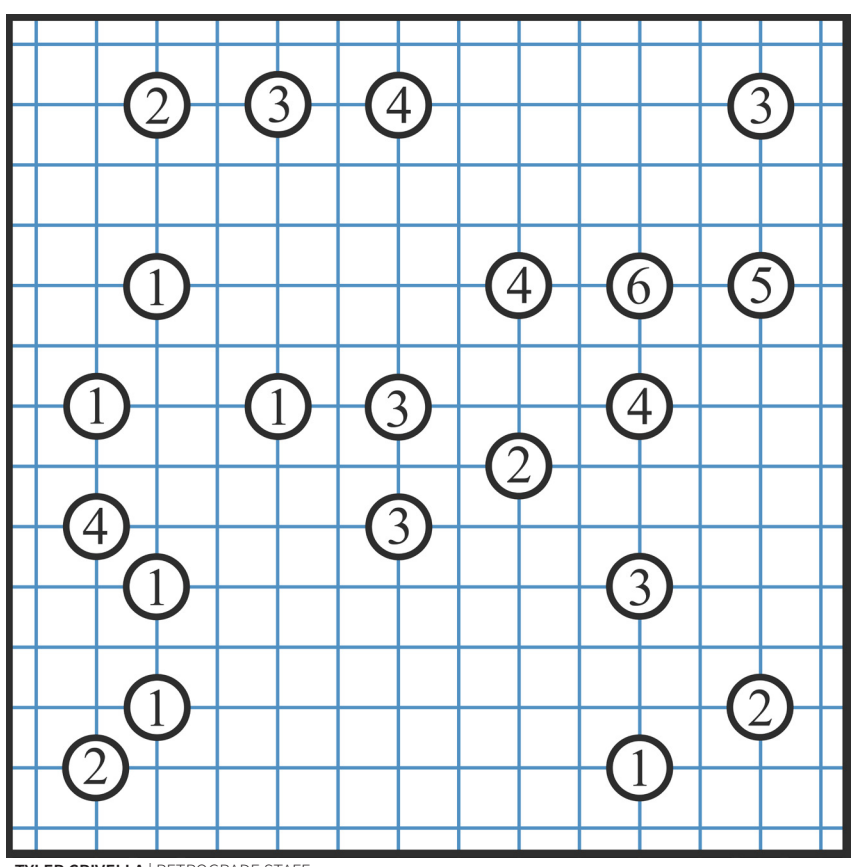
Instructions: Your goal is to fill up the 6×6 grid with numbers 1-6. Each column and row must have exactly one of each number. Each box (outlined with thick black lines) has a target number and a mathematical operation listed in the top-left corner. The numbers in each box must result in the target number when the corresponding mathematical operation is employed. For example, a box with 3+ could be satisfied with 1 and 2, as 1+2=3. Visit our website for a full walkthrough as well as answers to this week's puzzle.



RAINIER PEDERSON | RETROGRADE STAFF

Hashi

Instructions: Connect all islands to one network by drawing only horizontal or vertical lines. Lines may not cross. The total number of lines attached to a given island is the number presented in its circle. Each island may only have two lines attached to it in any given direction.



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BATTLE OF THE COSPLAYERS

During UTD's annual Comet Con, students showed off their passion projects, basked in applause from cosplay enthusiasts and vied for prizes

HENRY DAVIS
Staff Writer

Countless worlds merged in the SSA auditorium on March 26, bringing everyone from Hatsune Miku to Anakin Skywalker together on the same stage. Attendees wore colorful wigs and sported all sorts of outfits, both familiar and strange, at the cosplay competition during this year's Comet Con. As a first-time attendee there was much I did not know about this event, but once the lights dimmed and the host began to hype up an auditorium filled with cosplayers and cosplay enjoyers, I knew I was in for a treat.

The host began announcing more than 20 contestants, each person managing to match the infectious energy of the crowd. One by one, each contestant was called onstage and had 10 seconds to strike a pose or shuffle a dance.

Each cosplay was its own little universe of design and construction. Greer Phetsopha, animation junior and first-time cosplay competitor, cosplayed as the Veteran Ranger from "Fallout: New Vegas" with a helmet, weapon and armor; all 3D printed. Yesenia Guzman, animation sophomore, channeled Tenna from the video game "Deltarune" by sporting a retro TV covering her head. And Dema Dwaik, math senior and another first-time competitor, went as the gingerbread man from "Shrek," her Gingy costume consisting of a cardboard head piece, papier mache gumdrops as buttons on her suit and a large lollipop made out of pool tubes.

The variety of themes was impressive; about half the cosplayed characters were from anime and the other half were from all other media types. From anime, the audience saw characters from titles like "Delicious in Dungeon" and "Frieren: Beyond Journey's End." For non-anime, we saw characters like the Saja Boys from "KPop Demon Hunters" and the iconic Waldo from "Where's Waldo?"

It quickly became apparent how unpredictable some of the contestants were going to be, and by the look on the host's face, many of their acts were unplanned. We saw a full scene from "KPop Demon Hunters" and crusaders delivering a segment that could've come straight from "Braveheart."

But what was common among all the contestants was the attention to detail in their costumes and the large amounts of effort needed to make a cosplay instantly recognizable. Phetsopha said her costume costed around $500, with most of the costs going toward the trench coat, or "duster." To achieve an impressive appearance, she utilized unusual techniques to give her duster a rough, textured look.

> "Don't be afraid to start, no matter what your skill level is."
>
> **— Yesenia Guzman**

"I took a sponge, dipped in brown paint, and smeared it all over the jeans and duster," Phetsopha said. "For just the duster, I took a knife and stabbed it."

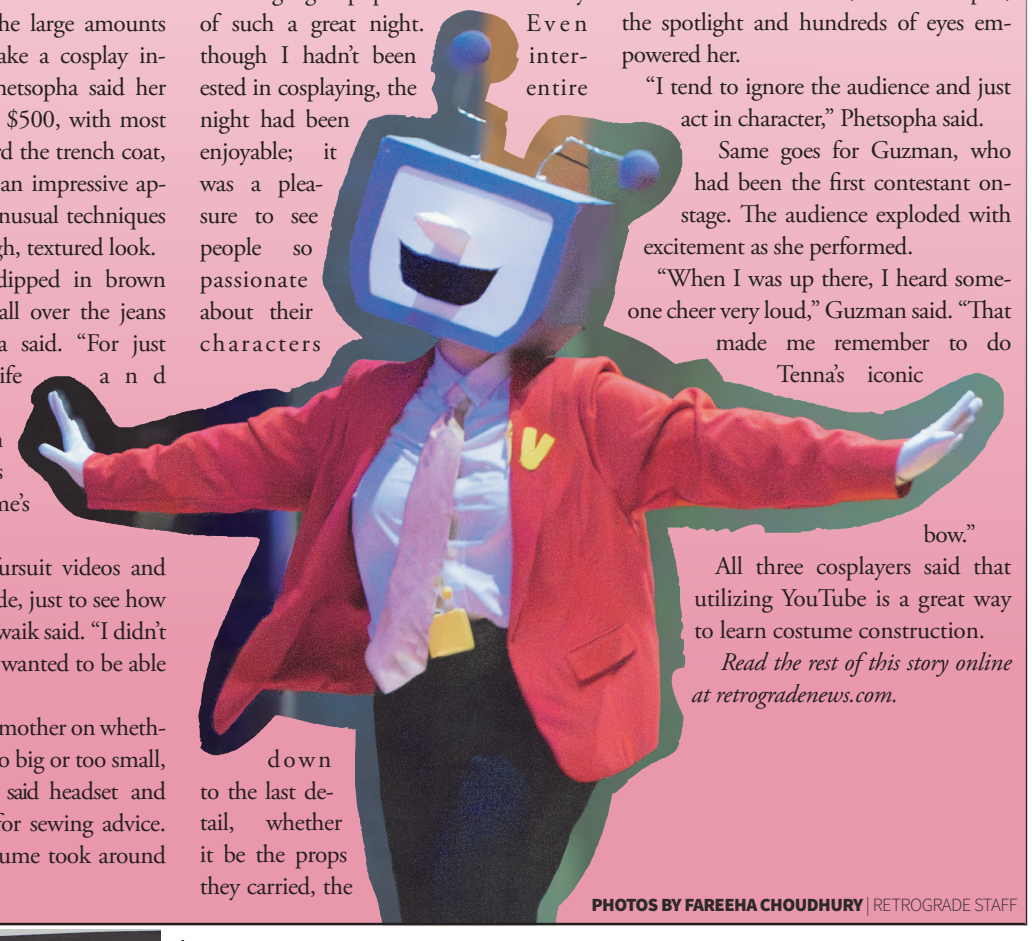
For Dwaik, the main source of her problems came from the costume's head piece.

"I was looking up fursuit videos and how furry heads are made, just to see how they sit on the head," Dwaik said. "I didn't want to overheat, and I wanted to be able to breathe."

Dwaik consulted her mother on whether the headset looked too big or too small, created prototypes for said headset and employed her mother for sewing advice. In all, she said her costume took around 28 hours to make.

After the contestants finished, the audience was given ballots to pick who their favorite cosplayer was. When the judges returned, we saw there were five categories for the contestants: "Audience's Choice," "Judges'" Choice," "Best Skit," "Club Choice" and "Best Walk On."

Notably, Kawaii-Chan's cosplayer, KC Pooler, won both "Best Skit" and "Audience's Choice." And from our interviewed cosplayers, Guzman won "Judges' Choice." After the results, all contestants as well as anyone in the audience who was cosplaying was invited on stage to take one huge group photo as a memory of such a great night. Even though I hadn't been interested in cosplaying, the entire night had been enjoyable; it was a pleasure to see people so passionate about their characters down to the last detail, whether it be the props they carried, the wigs they wore or the voices they used for their acts.



The competition not only had a social impact on the contestants but also an emotional one. Dwaik said she has some social anxiety and that performing in her costume and letting the crowd see her work gave her a boost of confidence.

"I had people come up to me after the competition and ask for a photo, which was a very new experience for me," Dwaik said. "I thought people would judge me, but they were very interested."

For other contestants, like Phetsopha, the spotlight and hundreds of eyes empowered her.

"I tend to ignore the audience and just act in character," Phetsopha said.

Same goes for Guzman, who had been the first contestant onstage. The audience exploded with excitement as she performed.

"When I was up there, I heard someone cheer very loud," Guzman said. "That made me remember to do Tenna's iconic bow."

All three cosplayers said that utilizing YouTube is a great way to learn costume construction.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

PHOTOS BY FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | RETROGRADE STAFF

PHOTOS BY SHRADDA SUBASH | RETROGRADE STAFF

"Held in the Everyday" makes you remember

The SP/N exhibition pulls photos together to create nostalgia and reflection

MAR OLOGBAN
Staff Writer

Curated by Ph.D. student Fatemeh Baigmoradi, the SP/N Gallery display "Held in the Everyday: Photographs of Memory and Trace" debuted in early February to capture the type of nostalgic longing one experiences when flipping through old photographs.

Baigmoradi describes the gallery as hosting spaces, items and small nuances, and all the memories those things hold. The gallery focused on displaying artwork from the Comer Collection, a collection of art featuring numerous female artists and photographers from Texas, that showcases these feelings. Baigmoradi pulled the art from the Comer Collection to magnify these feelings of nostalgia.

"[Memory] is something we as human beings deal with every day," Baigmoradi said. "I wanted that everybody who came to see the exhibition could have a flashback of their own memories as well."

It's a cornerstone of many creatives' artistic process to reflect their life experiences into their work. For Baigmoradi, she ties in her past not only through her curatorial choices, but also through her original piece, "Objectivity and Subjectivity," displayed farther back in the gallery. The work consists of a film tape of multiple pictures that seem like screenshots from one's memory. With the film appearing damaged, the reel seems like it hails from a long-gone era — the exact goal Baigmoradi hoped to achieve.

> "I wanted that everybody who came to see the exhibition could have a flashback of their own memories as well."
>
> **— Fatemeh Baigmoradi**

"I decided for this exhibition to include one of my own artwork in response to [the] archive, which is also about memory and how we remember our past," Baigmoradi said. "Do we remember that event or that thing in the past or [do] we just remember the last photo that we have from it?"

Baigmoradi's life began in Iran. Growing up, she would capture the world through her camera in her parents' house. Even through difficult times, looking back at the captures meant a lot to her.

"It was my strategy when I wanted to leave a place that was dear for me," Baigmoradi said. "I tried to take photos of it as much as I can. In that way, I carry it with myself somehow."

While a key part of this gallery is her personal art, most of it is other artists' work she curated. The experience of curating art proved to be a bigger challenge to Baigmoradi than making her own. Yet with an archivist and artist's brain on hand, she found a way to overcome what can be a tiring process.

"When you are working with an archive and you are going to curate from an archive, it's so different that if you want to curate from artists that you know and talk to them and choose work from them," Baigmoradi said. "You have a lot to work with … That's a challenge, but it has its own process, which is so joyful for me, honestly."

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

What makes for a fun Friday night? Riichi mahjong, of course

Grab some tiles and buckle in for a night of exhilirating, breakneck gameplay

RIICHI MAHJONG CLUB | COURTESY

HENRY DAVIS
Staff Writer

Since 2019, UTD students have fought, strategized and stolen from each other on Friday nights. I decided to join them by attending a meeting of the Riichi Mahjong club.

Popular across Asia with roots in the 19th century, mahjong is a tile-based game about tactics, strategy and dramatic tile stealing. Each tile has a suit labeled with a Chinese character either representing numbers, dragons or wind directions. The gameplay mainly involves taking a tile, either keeping or tossing it, or even ponging — stealing — another person's tile. Riichi mahjong is a Japanese variant on the game that places more emphasis on defensive and risk-taking gameplay. Before going to the first meeting of UTD's Riichi Mahjong club, I watched online videos of mahjong gameplay showing players quiet, focused and driven; their strategies seemingly based on skill. Walking into the Founder's classroom for an afternoon of play, I couldn't have been more wrong.

The players were indeed focused and driven, but they were also very inclusive of new members and rather vocal. The players laughed, chatted and lightly trash-talked their opponents as well as themselves. The setting was anything but stressful, with Japanese pop playing in the background and the scattering of tiles on tabletops bringing everyone to a flow state.

My obvious ignorance of how to perform the simplest turns wasn't met with frustration, but with excitement for having another player. The most important concept turned out to be yaku, which is like a five-card hand — think of a royal flush in poker — except it comprises 14 tiles. The yaku is required for winning the game. Without it, your hand is moot, said computer science sophomore and club president Tyler Keonine. This yaku is what makes Riichi different from other mahjong versions.

"Yaku is a winning condition," Keonine said. "You need this combination to win and there are thousands of combinations to win with."

These yaku hands can contain tiles from the numbers, circles and bamboo suits, higher-valued tiles of the same three suits called aka, as well as "honor tiles" such as winds and dragons. There are tens of yaku hands but for beginners, including myself, there are three to know: riichi, tanyao and yakuhai. Riichi, for example, is where you have four sets of three sequences (4,5,6) and/or triplets (1, 1, 1), with the last two tiles being the same tile. That might look like having 1, 2, 3 in numbers suit; a set of 4, 4, 4 in bamboo suit; a set of three north winds; and finally, the last two tiles being two red dragons. The randomness in this hand makes it the easiest for beginners to get their bearings in the game.

Of course, with any new game, the best way to learn is through baptism by fire — where you're thrown into the game without knowing anything besides the fact that you know nothing. During gameplay, I posed numerous questions, such as: "Why is this five of a bamboo suit red, but this same five of bamboo is black?", "Why was my turn skipped?" and "Can I steal this tile from you?".

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

CAMERA & PEN: FURRY FIESTA

PHOTOS BY MUAAZ ABED | RETROGRADE STAFF

GRAPHICS BY RAINIER PEDERSON | RETROGRADE STAFF

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Retrograde rocks in Ruins

In a gorgeous concert venue, The Retrograde and Pump Action show off their musical mastery

RAINIER PEDERSON
Staff Writer

Editor's Note: *The Retrograde (band) and The Retrograde (newspaper) are two different, unrelated entities.*

A ferocious blue dragon leaps out from the wall, its piercing yellow eyes shining like lanterns in the dark cave-like room. Figures twist and shriek in its gaping mouth as they are consumed by the endless fire within the monster's stomach. And just two feet in front of this scene, a band — surrounded by dancing lights — performs for a small crowd April 9.

The venue for the show was Ruins, a Mexican cocktail bar in the heart of Deep Ellum emblazoned with art on every surface. Past a cozy seating area for patrons to enjoy drinks and appetizers lies the bar's performance hall, the Limbo Room. The hall is covered from floor to ceiling in art of saints, demons and damned souls, the contrast melting into a purgatory befitting of its name.

As my friend and I finished the last of our $10 chips and guacamole, the Limbo Room's sound system played a cover of Talking Heads' "Psycho Killer" in high enough quality that I worried I had missed the entrance of the live band. My fears were assuaged when the first act, Florida-based band The Retrograde, walked onstage and tested their equipment, tuning and partially jamming along to the pre-show number. The music cut out and the band launched directly into "Sometimes," the lead from their most recent EP "No Sleep on Adams Street."

From their first notes, the bandmates' hip thrusts and playful exchanged glances demonstrated a clear fraternity with each other and mastery of their material. They almost seemed to play in a bubble that the dozen or so of us present at the concert's start just happened to stumble in on, but even so, I could tell I was in for a good ride.

From "Sometimes," the band transitioned into "I Need A Little," a song which left me unable to think anything but, "Goddamn, this boy can play." While the recorded version's guitarwork is already impressive, the runs were magnitudes more dramatic live, and the band took more liberties in letting the guitar do whatever the players felt called to do. This was a constant throughout the concert: the band had truly mastered their instruments and knew how to push each one to its fullest.

As the last chords rang out, singer and lead guitarist Joe Fox greeted the audience with, "Dallas, Texas, we feeling good?" The beer and watermelon vape-scented audience responded with cheers at a volume that far exceeded its small size. Any worries I had about not fitting in because of my blue jeans and UTD-branded T-shirt were washed away when I saw that they matched almost perfectly with Fox's own washed-out jeans and red Florida State University tee. The band, currently on their "We're Not in Florida Anymore" tour, mentioned multiple times this was their first excursion to Dallas.

From here, they swept cleanly between a few songs, including "It's Alright," "Dirty Daisy" and "Closer to Somewhere," all off their 2024 album "That's the Spirit!" At the first notes of "Closer to Somewhere," Fox clasped the microphone and softened his vocals, adopting a more yearning tone than he'd had for the previous entries. This, in addition to making the lyrics more intelligible compared to the other rock vocalizations, went miles in selling the story of the song. His voice transformed him seamlessly into an underdog protagonist in a desperate last attempt at making love work.

The exchange at the end of the song perfectly encapsulated The Retrograde's earnest, yet distinctly music-first energy. "Thank you for coming out to support live music," Fox told the audience as the final chords wound down. "Now I'm going to shut the fuck up and play guitar."

The band played through the next few songs with a frenetic energy that rebounded off every corner of the performance hall. Fox bounced around the stage, belting out lyrics and strumming chords so intensely that he started to lose himself in the beat. Rhythm guitarist Cade Pickering alternated between laying down melodies on his guitar and gliding over frets as each song demanded it, ensuring the rhythm never let up.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

PHOTOS BY MUAAZ ABED | RETROGRADE STAFF

Welcome to Carolyn Brown's world

"Intersections," the Athenaeum's newest exhibition, showcases the beauty of human connection across time and space

TYLER CRIVELLA
Asst. Managing Editor

FAREEHA CHOUDHURY
Staff Writer

The downstairs hall of the Crow Museum at UTD has been refitted with local artist Carolyn Brown's vivid architectural images.

As somethng of a renegade explorer, Brown traveled the world's finest buildings — even those she wasn't necessarily allowed access to — throughout the twentieth century. Now, 21 of her photos of Middle Eastern and European architecture will hang in the downstairs hall of the Crow Museum's UTD location for all to see.

Her work is a known favorite to UTD curators, who have previously displayed it in the SP/N gallery during her 2018 exhibition "Carolyn Brown: The Retrospective," in the ATEC Building during her 2022 display "Carolyn Brown and Palmyra: An Ancient City Through the Lens" and even inside the offices of Crow Museum staff like Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History director Michael Thomas.

Embodying a unique perspective on historical monuments, Brown's newest exhibition "Intersections: Photographs by Carolyn Brown" captures the interactions of humanity across time and space.

Collecting the collection

Graduate program adviser Heather Bowling worked closely with the artist to curate the exhibition. After visiting Brown herself and sifting through the hundreds of potential photographs lying on the tables and across the walls of Brown's comfortable abode, Bowling noticed how the artist compiled triptychs — a three-part pairing — depicting a variety of scenes.

The format is typically used in religious art, but after looking more closely, Bowling discovered a common beauty that the triptychs all had: stories of human connection, despite or because of changes. Through the curation of the exhibit, Bowling hopes students can examine, ponder upon and discover what hidden, unique connections each piece has to share.

"You're always looking at things in comparison to one another," Bowling said. "She's doing this thing where she's putting [scenes] together as a sort of meditation on the language and writing and seeing what they have in common. That's what I love."

A personal favorite of Bowling's is "Hagia Sophia," taken in 2015 during Brown's exploration of Istanbul, Turkey. The piece flaunts all kinds of intricacies embedded within the mosque's interior. One's eye first follows the circular divisions; however, when examined more closely, the specific artistry of each religion proves to aesthetically complement each other. Despite being crafted by artists across hundreds of years, the work remains well preserved.

While newer architects have added their own trace — modern additions — to the hub of stories hidden within the walls of the mosque, Brown's imagery illustrates how centuries of modification is beautiful not just within each period, but also as a part of the much longer dance through history.

In curatorial work, almost no detail is a mistake. From the exact color code of the wall's paint to the height and angle of each artwork, art curation is a heavily intricate and thoughtful process. And so, it's with great intention that this piece is placed at the very beginning of the hall.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

PHOTOS BY FAREEHA CHOUDHURY | ASST. PHOTO EDITOR

How a grad student is scrubbing away hospital inefficiency

Discharging patients and readying hospital beds for the next person in line may no longer be such an arduous task

NANDINI SINGH
Life & Arts Editor

GRAPHIC BY ALEXA LEE | RETROGRADE STAFF

Master's student in management science Sindhura Anumolu finds that in hospitals, figuring out which beds are open and can take a patient is a paper-intensive process with a slow turnaround time. So she built an app to help.

HelioOps is an AI-powered hospital bed platform that informs nurses when a bed is available for an incoming patient.

"This is a tool for nurses who are always on the move and need some kind of system that is easily accessible for them instead of going and sitting in front of the computer and keep updating what is happening with every patient," Anumolu said. "[I] came up with something simple which they can hold in hand and do it with a click, a button or just one tap."

Hospitals beds may seem like a niche topic in medicine compared to, say, curing disease. For Anumolu, who lost her mother in 2022 to cancer, the story hits closer to home. There wasn't always a hospital bed ready in time for her mom during hospital visits, which struck her as an avoidable issue.

"When we were taking her for chemotherapy visits to hospitals, most of the time it was scheduled, but most of the time we would wait for hours to get [a] bed," Anumolu said. "There was one instance where she was put in the blood bank because there were no [beds] available, and doctors and nurses were going back and forth. It was really frustrating."

Anumolu's initial goal was to be a doctor, but she couldn't get through the medical exams. Instead, she came to the U.S. and joined the master's program at UTD. In one of her classes, she came across a case study from Singapore in which health care workers optimized bed management during COVID-19. Anumolu said that was when things began to fall into place.

"Me and Professor [Mandar] Samant both thought to do research on this, and see where exactly the problem exists, and we did [it] for U.S. hospitals," Anumolu said. "After doing that, we thought, 'Let's create some solutions out of it,' and that's when I came up with HelioOps."

Instead of trying to solve the problem by constructing new beds, Anumolu's idea hopes to make sure the beds that already exist are used as efficiently as possible.

"In the U.S. … there is something called construction loss [where] we need approval to construct something new," Anumolu said. "By the time you get that approval it takes five to seven years, and by [that] time we are in a bigger crisis. The facts say that by 2032 we will be short of 150,000 beds and you really can't keep constructing beds. We need to have a tool which optimizes the existing solution — whatever we have, we need to use those resources first."

> "We need to have a tool which optimizes the existing solution: whatever we have, we need to use those resources first."
>
> **— Sindhura Anumolu**

Anumolu said that a day in the life of a nurse goes as follows: The first thing they do is figure out which patients are ready for discharge, and then they begin to coordinate with multiple departments on calls to release the patient and ready the bed for its next use. They also must move across multiple units to find open beds while constantly inputting data. This entire process can take from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., she said.

"Everyone is frustrated, it's all chaos everywhere," Anumolu said. "What we are trying to do is ease this a bit and start [the] discharges by 11 a.m. The moment nurses enter the hospital, [they] will be able to see [their] mobile app, which shows which patient is ready for discharge or which patient has a chart not ready. [They] will be able to see all that in one single app."

AI has yet to be extensively integrated into health care. But Anumolu finds AI's presence in her project to not pose any issues to patient health or hospital operations.

"We are not doing clinical decisions here, we are not diagnosing anyone or prescribing any medicine, so that is one reason why people won't be hesitant," Anumolu said. "It's making the job easier for the nurse, and it's not replacing [them] because [they are] the one at the end of the day who [have] to click it or [they] are the one who have that human interference in between and take the decision."

Being an entrepreneur has its challenges. More than two-thirds of startups never generate any return on investment. Anumolu said that she too has faced those moments; her biggest challenge so far has come from making the app simplistic instead of bogged down in details. As she spoke with nurses and various hospitals, Anumolu said they wanted something that was easy to use.

"When you are in a low point you have to look at different personas and see if I am facing this problem, how about the other person, how will they think [or] how will they react to it," Anumolu said. "And that I think helps a lot."

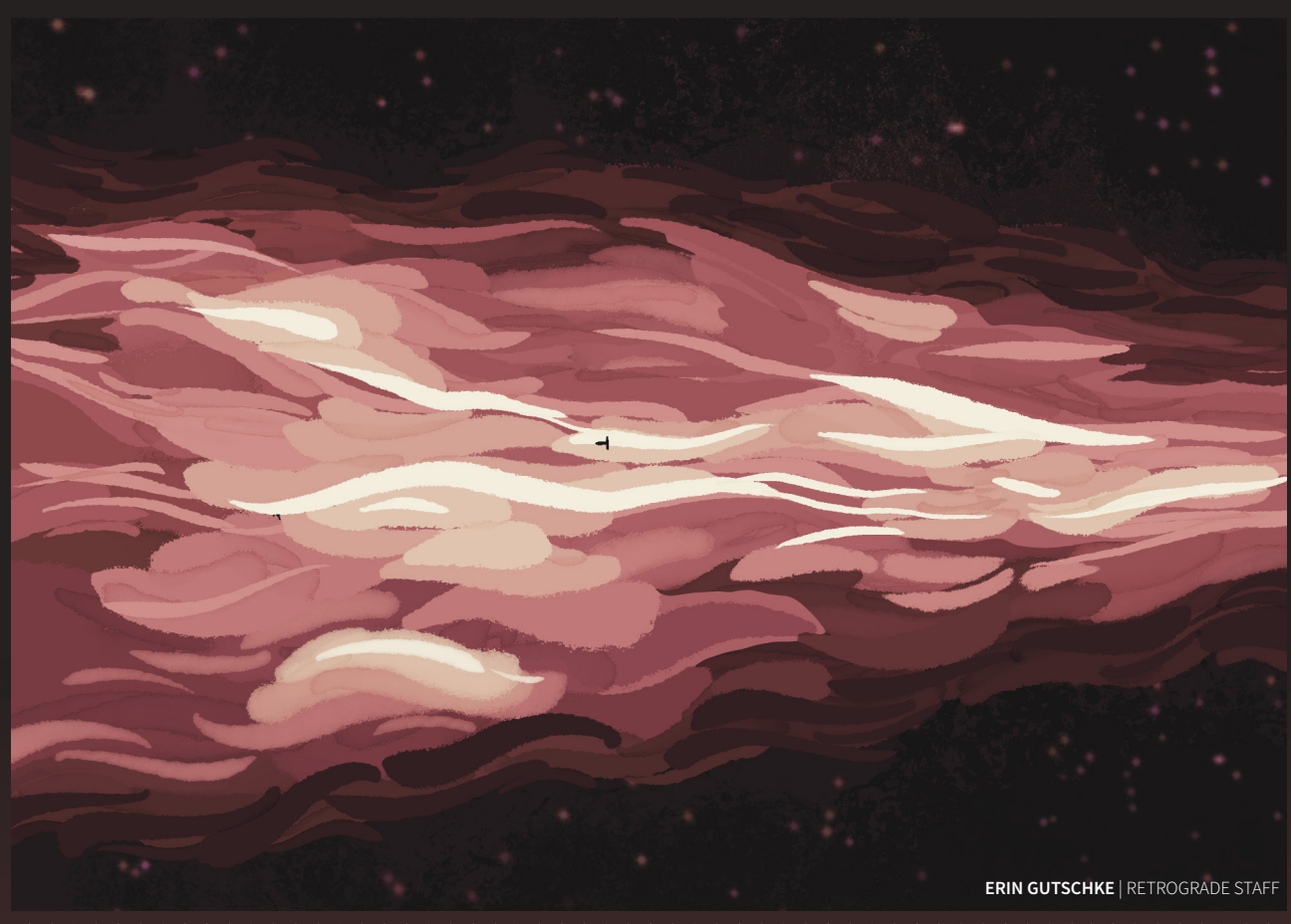
Anumolu plans for HelioOps to be tested in a few pilot experiments where she can collaborate with a hospital and see how her app performs. Based on that, she hopes to expand the app to other hospitals. Despite nearing the end of her master's program, she doesn't see an end to what she is doing: developing the app, talking to the people that'll use it, vying for venture capital.

"When you are really passionate about something, you find that gap [of time], and you still work on it, " Anumolu said. "This is something which I was really, really passionate about, I [love] the idea. I am enjoying every bit of it [and] this isn't going to stop."

"Project Hail Mary" does what film adaptations do

I don't need one-to-one adaptations. I need to see that you understood why this story matters and can translate it for the movie-going audience.

ASHNA KARIA
Opinion Editor


ERIN GUTSCHKE | RETROGRADE STAFF

I need reasons to hope. Everything around us moves faster and faster and decisions are made in rooms I'm not in. Art is made, but whether I see it among the clutter is a matter of fate beyond my control. I need stories that commiserate with me and then turn around to quiet my fears, reminding me that hope, wonder and curiosity are not fleeting or accidental. They can be what saves us when the light of the sun gets stolen away.

At risk of spoiling a perfect novel, that is what "Project Hail Mary" does, and after braving a movie theater in the age of streaming and $20 movie tickets, I could tell it did the same for the filmmakers.

No movie is ever going to be able to represent the books we love in perfect detail, in part because no two people ever read the same story.

Adaptations are hard to get right, especially when contending with fans like me who don't want movies as much as we want time-sensitive reasons to tell everyone around us to read our favorite books. No movie is ever going to be able to represent the books we love in perfect detail, in part because no two people ever read the same story. So how can a filmmaker be expected to take that story, itself containing multitudes, and whittle it into shape for 90 minutes of a whole different medium?

"Project Hail Mary" answers this challenge by reminding the pedantic critics among us, myself included, that the goal is not to make a visual novel. A film adaptation excels when, out of the endless possibilities provided by the source material, it has selected its message, its perspective and its audience and is allowing everything else to act in service of that one vision. Humanity needs hope to survive, and we need people who are brave enough to try even when armed with the slimmest margin of that hope. That's the vision.

This is a story that starts when everything feels hopeless. A man wakes up alone in space. He is not an astronaut; he is a middle-school science teacher with a seemingly endless supply of punny T-shirts. His name is Ryland Grace. There is a red line arcing from the Sun to Venus slowly siphoning away heat, effectively dooming the Earth to a slow, cold march towards starvation. He has to find a solution.

This is approximately the order in which he remembers facts about himself as he wakes up from the medically-induced coma and years-long journey that his two crewmates did not survive. Instead, trust me that the minds at work in crafting this film saw what I saw, and felt what I did upon reading the book, and were somehow able to translate it to the screen.

> "Instead, trust me that the minds at work in crafting this film saw what I saw, and felt what I did upon reading the book, and were somehow able to translate it to the screen."

I'd tell you the rest, but that would deprive you of the feeling of experiencing a beautiful story for the first time.

Sometimes the most popular things — or people — get that way for good reason. Ryan Gosling brings Grace to life with his performance. He walks into conference rooms like a kid being sent to the principal's office, but in his classroom, in his lab and in zero-G he comes alive. Fear sent him to space: dire, desperate fear and a last-ditch hope that maybe there was a solution somewhere up in the stars. Yet Grace is more than either of those things because he gives himself space for wonder.

He appreciates beauty in a faraway planet, in the contours of alien metal, and even amid the thin red line that sent him to space in the first place. The movie lingers on these stunning visuals, encompassing the grandeur of space, but it feels like more than eye candy. We are seeing the world through Grace's eyes and he thinks it is absolutely stunning. This is even clearer in the book, as Grace often takes a moment to revel in just how cool whatever he's doing is before returning to the task at hand, but I was genuinely shocked at how well the filmmakers translated this to the screen.

When he floats alone inside the Petrova line, Earth's official name for it, he lets a million red particles wash over him just to soak in the moment. A wide shot shows him there from afar. So far from the rest of humanity, carrying all their hopes on his shoulders, honoring them by seeing something no one ever had before and appreciating it.

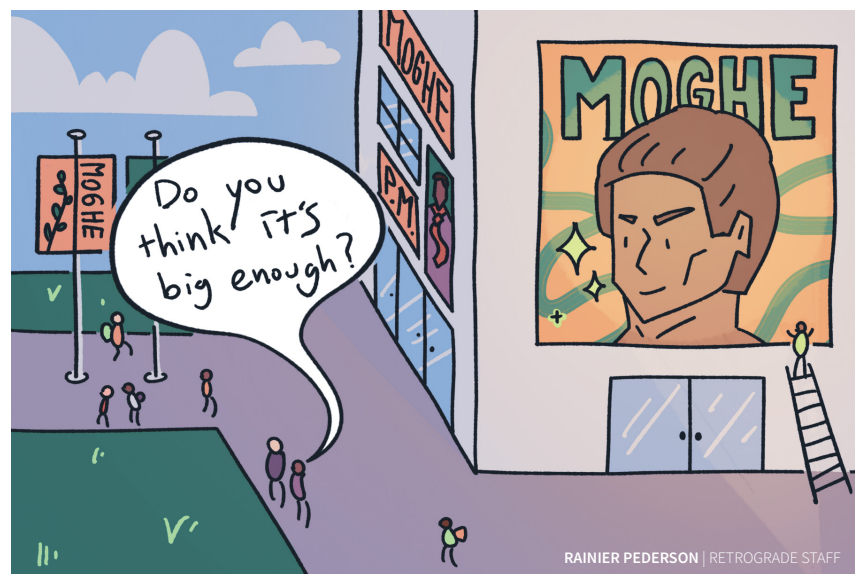
The power of a striking visual, a sweeping score, the emotions inscribed on someone's face; it cannot be understated.

Even though I felt tears fighting their way out, I couldn't bring myself to close my eyes even for a second and risk missing this view. I knew in that moment that this was exactly the same feeling being portrayed onscreen. The power of a striking visual, a sweeping score, the emotions inscribed on someone's face; it cannot be understated.

Even if the opening scene hadn't immediately earned my trust by being an almost one-to-one representation of the book's first lines and even if I hadn't experienced religious levels of sweater envy seeing Grace's fox cardigan, this scene would have cinched it. My initial displeasure with pacing — there's a twist about 200 pages into the book that gets revealed 20 minutes into the movie — turned into a gripe I'm willing to set aside. It was worth it to see this film, just to see that someone out there felt what I did in reading this book and had the skill to translate it into visual language to share it with the rest of the world. Read the book, watch the movie, do whatever you need to do to feel this way, even for a moment.

RAINIER PEDERSON | RETROGRADE STAFF

EDITORIAL CARTOON



RAINIER PEDERSON | RETROGRADE STAFF

It is our solemn covenant to make the Board of Regents uncomfortable

The UT System Board of Regents banned controversial topics in classrooms. Become the reason they can't enforce it.

GREGORIO OLIVARES GUTIERREZ
Editor-in-Chief

Let's start with a question I keep hearing from students, faculty, staff and, honestly, anyone up to date on what the UT System Board of Regents just did: "What the fuck are they doing down in Austin?"

Because the answer, as far as I can tell, is that they're trying to make it impossible to teach. Not in such clear language, of course. They'd never be that honest. Instead, the Board of Regents has wrapped its latest power grab in the language of "solemn covenants," "academic integrity" and "protecting student rights." They unanimously adopted a policy so vague and ill-defined that it can mean anything an administrator wants it to mean on any given day.

And at UTD, we know exactly what that looks like.

The policy, officially titled "Expectations of Academic Integrity and Standards for Teaching Controversial Topics," was approved Feb. 19 by the board. It requires instructors to "fairly present differing views and scholarly evidence on reasonably disputed matters." It commands them to "eschew topics and controversies that are not germane to the course." It demands they "avoid introducing undisclosed material that is not clearly relevant."

But the policy never defines what makes a matter "reasonably disputed," never explains who decides when controversy is "germane" and never tells us what "balance" actually means in practice.

On paper, this sounds almost reasonable. No one objects to fairness, or wants irrelevant material in their classes. But the policy never defines what makes a matter "reasonably disputed," never explains who decides when controversy is "germane" and never tells us what "balance" actually means in practice. Ultimately, the policy creates plausible deniability.

And we've seen how this works at UTD. When students painted "Zionism = Nazism" on the Spirit Rocks, administrators didn't debate the merits of leaving such speech up or whether it complied with free speech policy. They just removed the rocks entirely, citing "extended political discourse." When students sought to use chalk at the Plinth last spring, administrators rushed to the Plinth to tell them, "The policy supersedes your First Amendment." SB 17's ban on diversity, equity and inclusion continues to ring through the countless now-empty offices that once supported students and did not strictly have to shut down under state law. And yet they did.

UTD has consistently over complied to vague laws and policy, but now the UT System has granted them carte blanche to silence anything in the classroom at a moment's notice.

The A&M precedent

If you think I am being dramatic, look at College Station. The Texas A&M System already implemented a similar policy this spring. Because of it, Plato has been removed from philosophy courses. A graduate-level ethics course on race and ethnicity was canceled three weeks into the semester. An introductory sociology course is gone. Professors are using AI to scrub their syllabi of words like "value diversity" and "embrace activism" so they can keep teaching.

This is what "broad and balanced" looks like when people who believe their job is to protect students from ideas get to decide what "balance" means.

The UT System wants us to believe they'll implement their version of A&M's policy more thoughtfully and more fairly. But they've given us no reason for that trust.

Read the rest of this story online at retrogradenews.com.

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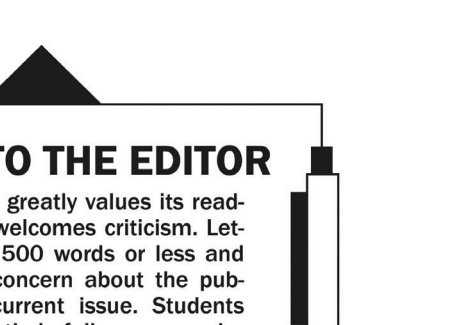

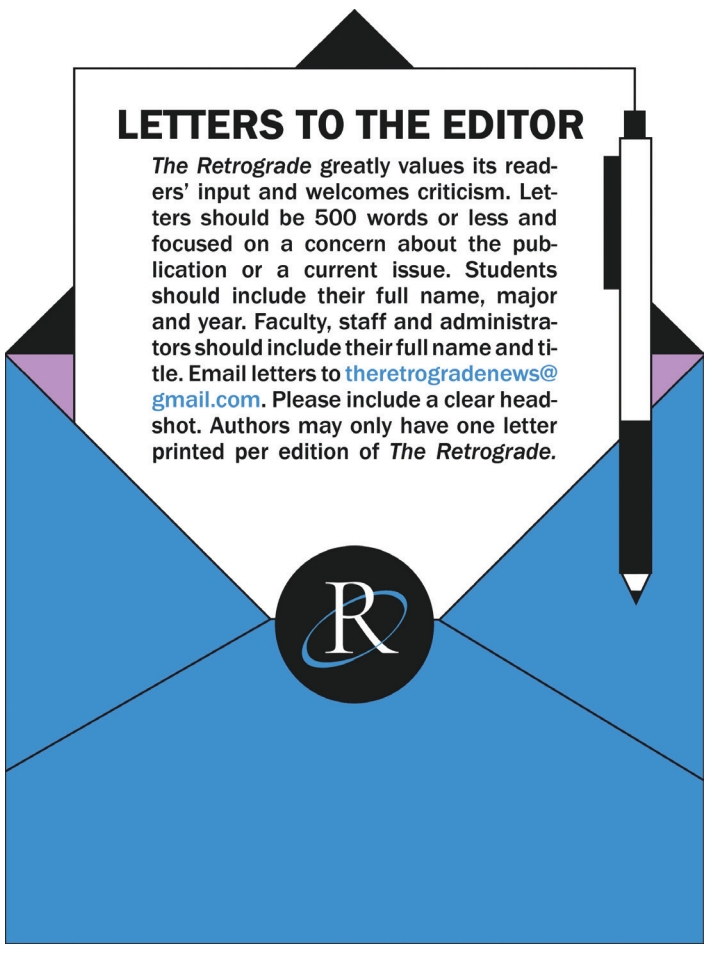
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